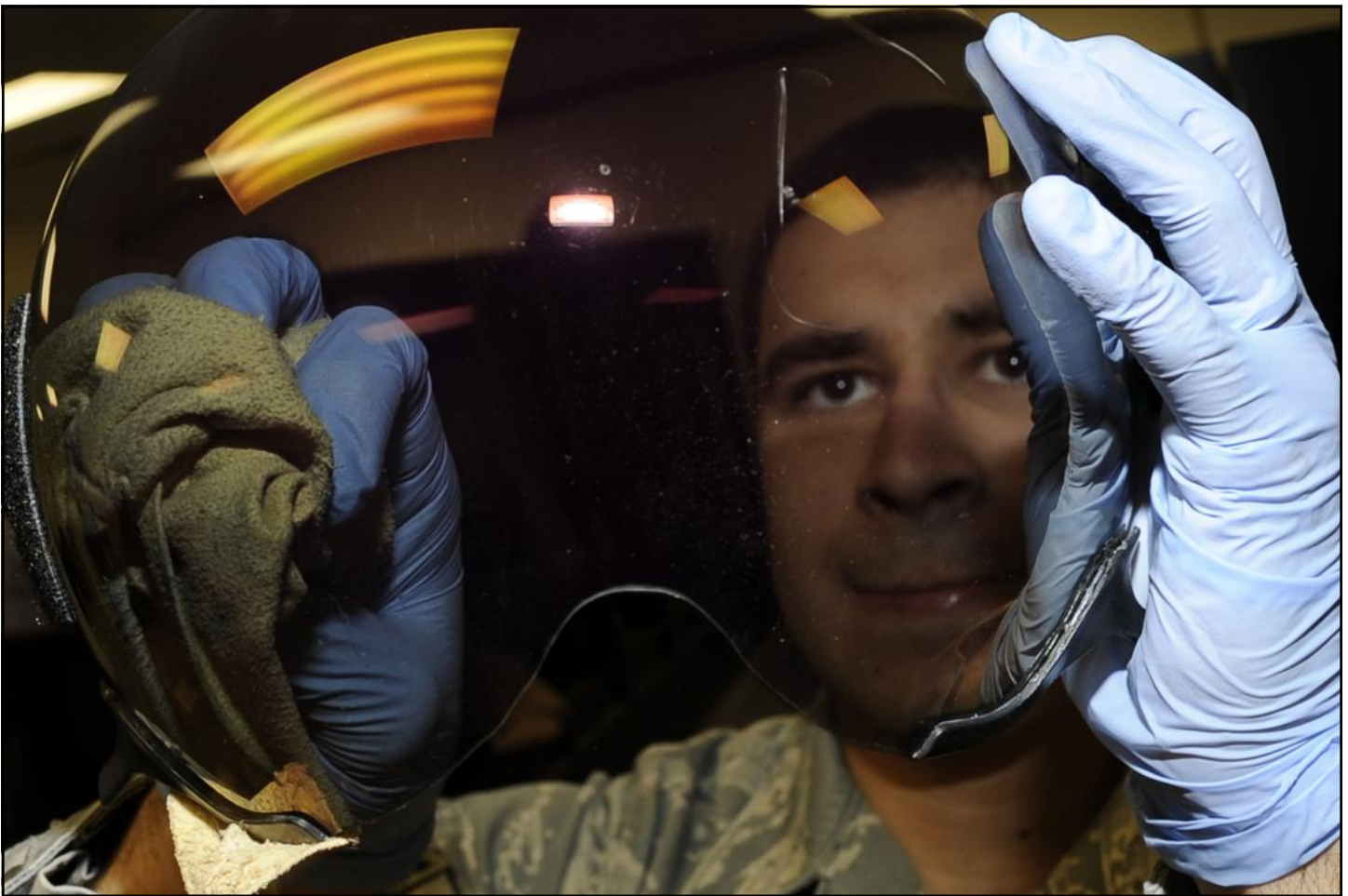


BAGRAM NEWS EXPRESS

START RIGHT, FINISH STRONG

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Preparing the pilot for success



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan--U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Jeremy Botello, aircrew flight equipment specialist, 455th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, cleans a lens before a pilot's flight Jan. 4, 2010. Botello is stationed at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. and is from Austin, Texas. (U.S. Air Force photo by: Tech. Sgt. Jeremy K. Cross)

**By: Staff Sgt. Richard Williams
455th Air Expeditionary Wing Public Affairs**

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – Most Airmen have seen an aircraft take off. They hear the hum of a taxiing jet. It sits at the end of the runway, and then zooms across the landscape as if it were shot from a cannon at a thousand miles per hour. The F-16 fighter lifts off en route to support Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines accomplishing missions everywhere.

This scene is the bedrock of the U.S. Air Force's operations, but before the pilot can step to the jet and

take off, there is one critical stop that must be made: the aircrew flight equipment section.

"On a daily basis, we inspect all the equipment needed by the pilots for a successful mission," said Airman 1st Class Jeremy Botello, 455th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, aircrew flight equipment specialist. "We look at everything from the helmet and night vision goggles to the 'G' suits and harness. We also ensure their display units that are used for targeting are operational."

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Flight

The meticulous inspection consists of checking the visors for cracks, ensuring the helmets have no dents or cracks and all of the interior parts are in place, said Botello, who is deployed from 20th OSS, Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. “We make sure that the pilots can see when they are out there and that their gear can stand up to the rigors of flight.”

The harness and survival gear are also inspected and repaired on an as needed basis so if the pilot has to eject, the proper gear is in place and operational to aid in survival and rescue efforts, said Botello.

“I can’t say enough about the criticality of what these guys do,” said Capt. David Snodgrass, 79th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, as he prepared his equipment to leave. “We have to know that when we launch, all of our equipment is ready to use and it is awesome to know we have such great professionals doing the job.”

“This is my first deployment. I work with a great crew and I have learned a lot here,” said Botello. “It is important to me that we are hands on with the mission. We have a direct impact on how things go up there and it is great to know if we accomplish our job they (the pilots) can do theirs.”

Botello said he gets his job satisfaction from seeing the pilots walk in after another successful mission. “I love to see them walk back in and tell me that the equipment worked great and there were no issues; it makes my job a lot easier.”



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan--U.S. Air Force Capt. David Snodgrass, 79th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, operational checks his night vision goggles before his flight Jan. 4, 2010. Snodgrass is from Ft. Worth, Texas and is stationed at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. (U.S. Air Force photo by: Tech. Sgt. Jeromy K. Cross)



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan--The Airmen of the 455th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron maintain pilot's life support equipment Jan. 4, 2010. (U.S. Air Force photo by: Tech. Sgt. Jeromy K. Cross)



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan--U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Jeremy Botello, aircrew flight equipment specialist, 455th Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron, works on a helmet while Capt. Austin Brown, 79th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron, prepares for his flight Jan. 4, 2010. Airman Botello is from Austin, Texas, and Brown is from Fountain Hills, Ariz. Both are stationed at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C. (U.S. Air Force photo by: Tech. Sgt. Jeromy K. Cross)



The Enlisted Perspective

By CMSAF James A. Roy

Airmen downrange doing a phenomenal job

During the Thanksgiving holiday and first week in December, I traveled throughout the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility and spent time with our Airmen “downrange.” Simply put, our Airmen are doing a phenomenal job across the CENTCOM AOR.

An example is the great work Airmen are performing as Air Advisors in Iraq and Afghanistan. These Airmen train and mentor Iraqi and Afghan forces, helping them build capacity so they’ll be able to take over security for their homeland. This is just one of several examples where Airmen readily accepted nontraditional wartime taskings and contributed even more to the CENTCOM mission.

Across the AOR, Airmen spoke candidly with me about their mission and brought up a variety of concerns in public and private meetings. Two that stand out are ensuring the Air Force is giving the proper amount of training to deploying Airmen and making sure the Air Force is doing the best job possible reintegrating Airmen to their home stations and families when they return from deployment. I assure you, I take these and other concerns seriously and will work with our Air Force senior leaders and the Air Staff to resolve issues. I also highlight these two issues so our commanders, officers in charge, chiefs, first sergeants and supervisors throughout the chain of command can take notice. There are no excuses for improper training or lack of care for our Airmen and families.

The Air Force and our sister services will face a changing mission in support of CENTCOM in 2010. The current plan calls for the removal of all our combat troops from Iraq by the end of 2011. However, as U.S. forces draw down in Iraq, we face escalating challenges in Afghanistan.

In a recent speech, President Obama announced 30,000 additional U.S. combat forces will deploy to Afghanistan in 2010. While military planners are still finalizing the structure, there’s no doubt our Air Force will play an even greater role in Afghanistan’s security and capacity to govern and protect itself. We can expect the expanded mission will bring even more traditional and joint expeditionary taskings. When CENTCOM calls upon our Air Force to contribute more, I fully trust our Airmen’s readiness to deploy and serve alongside joint and coalition forces. As our Chief of Staff, Gen. Schwartz, said, “the Air Force is ‘all in.’” Whether working in an Air Force, joint or coalition unit, Airmen will superbly accomplish their mission, regardless the task.

Since the era of the Army Air Corps, Airmanship has been essential to U.S. military power. As the airpower arm of the United States, we will continue to provide those irreplaceable Airmanship skills for the current wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as for future conflicts



James A. Roy
James A. Roy
Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force

Know Thy Enemy — The Taliban

By Douglas Beckstead
455 Air Expeditionary Wing Historian

Two weeks ago, I discussed the causes, effects and results of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. After they left in 1989, they left behind a country that had been wracked by war for over a decade. Afghanistan soon fell into massive civil war that continued to tear it apart. The various groups that composed the Mujahadeen and opposed the Soviets began fighting amongst themselves, each vying for control.

The result was a power vacuum ripe for any group to come into the picture and offer a sense of security and law and order.

The name *Taliban* comes from Arabic word meaning “students.” It is the plural of the word, *talib*, or “student.” The group got its start in the religious schools, *madrassas*, in Pakistan. For the most part they were schooled in a very conservative, radical interpretation of Islam.

Initially, the Taliban were welcomed by at least a portion of the population. They offered relief from the corruption, brutality and the incessant fighting that plagued Afghanistan from 1989 to the early-1990s.

The most significant event that is said to have led to the Taliban getting a toehold in Afghanistan involves bandits who raped and murdered children from a family traveling to Kandahar. This event sparked Mullah Mohammad Omar and his “students” to vow to rid Afghanistan of these criminals.

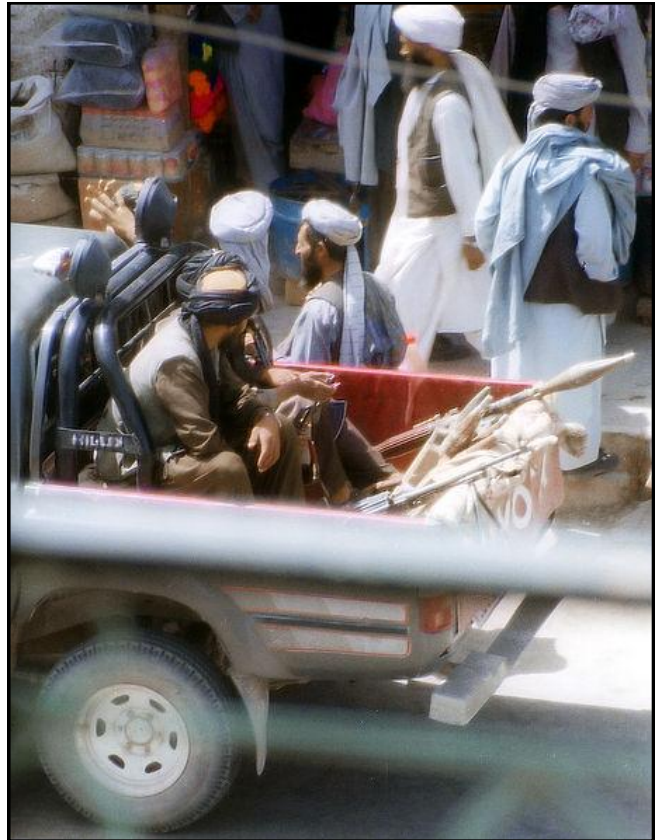
Omar and his group rode in with their pickup trucks in a scene that was probably reminiscent of an Old West movie where the new sheriff wore a white hat. In the case of the Taliban they wore black turbans.

After identifying the individuals involved, a quick trial was held in which they were found guilty and sentenced to be executed. The sentence was carried out that afternoon.

People all over the world are pretty much the same in their desires: Their biggest concerns are their families, keeping them housed, fed and most of all, safe. The Taliban offered the possibility of safety from the roaming bandits.

After gaining at least a modicum of popular support, in October-November 1994, the Taliban made their first military move when they marched on Kandahar capturing the city and the surrounding provinces. Over the next three months, they were able to take control of twelve of the 34 provinces that make up Afghanistan. Calling themselves the “Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan,” by September 1996, they controlled the capital of Kabul and were then in control of the government.

Shortly thereafter, the Taliban bestowed the title of



Taliban driving through Haret in 2001.
(Courtesy Photo Wikipedia Public Domain)

Amir al-Mu'minin (Commander of the Faithful) on Mullah Omar. This decision was criticized by some because Omar lacked scholarly learning, a tribal pedigree or connection to the Prophet Mohammad's family. Regardless, Omar ruled the Taliban and thus ruled Afghanistan. Omar simply claimed the role when he removed the cloak of the Prophet Mohammed from its shrine in Kandahar, draped it over his shoulders and appeared on the roof of the shrine before the assembled masses.

Over the next five years, the Taliban were recognized as the de facto government of Afghanistan by only three countries: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Under the Taliban, Sharia law was interpreted to ban a wide variety of activities that had previously been enjoyed in Afghanistan. Among these were employment, education and sports for women; movies, television, videos, dancing, kite flying (a popular pastime in Afghanistan), clapping during sporting events,

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and even hanging pictures in homes. According to one source, one list of prohibitions included “anything made of human hair, satellite dishes, cinematography, and equipment that produces joy including pool tables, chess, masks, alcohol, tapes, computers, VCRs, television, anything that propagates sex and is full of music, wine, lobster, nail polish, fire crackers, statues, sewing catalogs, pictures [and] Christmas cards.

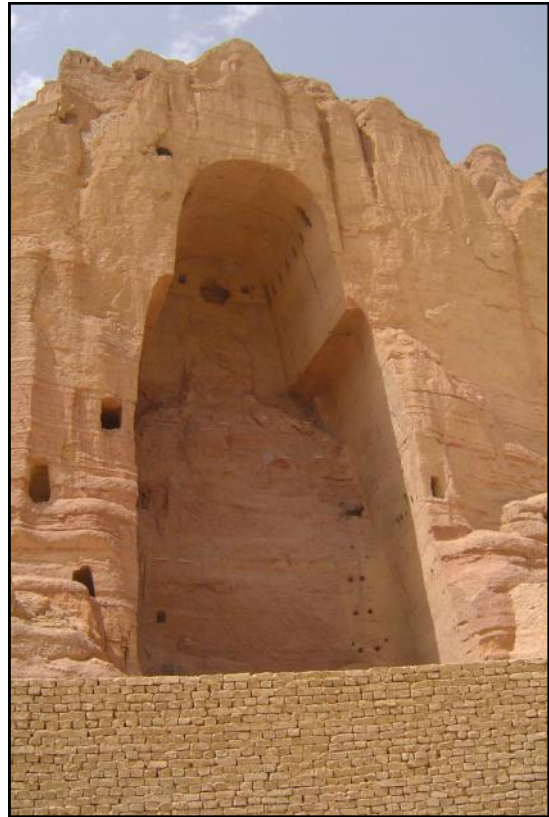
The edicts imposed on the people were issued by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Suppression of Vice and were enforced by their religious police. A common practice after taking over a village or town was for hundreds of religious enforcers to beat offenders, typically men without beards and women who were not wearing the *burqa* properly, with long sticks.

Punishments were severe. Theft was punished by amputation of a hand, rape and murder by public execution. Adulterers were stoned to death. Many of these punishments were carried out in front of crowds in Kabul’s former soccer stadium.

Ahmad Rashid, perhaps the world’s expert on the Taliban quoted a Taliban spokesman as saying, “We want to live a life like the Prophet lived 1,400 years ago ... We want to recreate the time of the Prophet and we are only carrying out what the Afghan people



Bamiyan Buddhist statues prior to their 2001 order of destruction by order of Mullah Omar.
(Courtesy photo)



Bamiyan statue site in 2004.
(Courtesy photo)

wanted for the past 14 years.”

One of the most widely known incidents of the Taliban attempting to purge Afghanistan of anything having to do with non-Muslims came when they destroyed the two Buddha statues at Bamiyan. They stood at 53 meters (160 feet) and 36 meters (100 feet) tall and had been carved from the solid sandstone cliffs by Buddhist monks who had also carved monasteries into the cliffs.

Hsuan-tsang, a well-known Chinese traveler of the 7th century described them as: “To the northeast of the royal city there is a mountain, on the declivity of which is placed a stone figure of Buddha, erect, in height 140 or 150 feet. Its golden hues sparkle on every side, and its precious ornaments dazzle the eyes by their brightness ... To the east ... there is a standing figure of Sakya Buddha ... in height 100 feet.”

The monks who built the statues left Afghanistan more than 14 centuries ago. In 1999, Mullah Omar issued a decree stating that the statues were to be protected because Afghanistan had no Buddhists and the statues did not pose a problem with their prohibition on idolatry. However, in March 2001, they were destroyed after Omar reversed his original decree this time stating that all statues around Afghanistan were to be destroyed. The world watched in horror as tons of dynamite obliterated the two statues.

The Taliban, with their extremist views of what Islam should be, created a fertile environment for other

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groups with similar ideas to flourish. One of these was Al-Qaeda, whose leader, Osama bin Laden, had been thrown out of several other countries that thought his brand of Islam too extreme.

He was able to establish training camps that promoted both his extremist ideals and his hatred of the West. From those camps he and his subordinates hatched the plots to bomb the USS Cole, the two U.S. embassies in Africa and the Khobar Towers.

Fortunately, there were still groups within Afghanistan that opposed the Taliban. These groups called their loose federation the "Northern Alliance." Their leader, Ahmad Shah Massoud, formulated plans to use guerilla tactics on the Shamali Plains (the area that surrounds Bagram Airfield) to defeat the Taliban advances through the country. The Taliban countered by indiscriminately attacking villages and killing young men.

The front lines between the Northern Alliance and Taliban forces ran through the center of Bagram Airfield. Each side controlled opposite ends of the airfield utilizing the structures on either end of the runway as fortifications from which to shell one another. As a result, when you travel around the perimeter you can see the ruins of what were once thriving villages torn apart by war.

On Sept. 9, 2001, two Al-Qaeda members posing as a television news crew, detonated a camera filled with explosives while supposedly interviewing Massoud about the fight against the Taliban.

The assassination of Massoud did not stop the opposition to the Taliban. In fact, after the attack on the World Trade Center two days later, the United States drove the Taliban from Afghanistan and back into Pakistan from whence they came.



Smoking is allowed:

- ☐ In your room
- ☐ Between the huts
- ☐ In a GOV
- ☒ None of the above

Smoking is **ONLY** authorized in designated areas.

By order of the
Wing Commander



**94.1 FM
Afghanistan**

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Providing for the needs of a country



BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan--U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Georlita Senen, 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron, checks the vitals of an Afghan who entered Bagram Airfield for medical treatment Jan. 5, 2010. Senen is stationed at Dyess Air Force Base, Texas, and is from Waipahu, Hawaii. (U.S. Air Force photo by: Tech. Sgt. Jeromy K. Cross)



(Left) BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan--U.S. Air Force Airmen from the 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron view Afghans entering Bagram Airfield for medical treatment Jan. 5, 2010.

(Right) U.S. Air Force Staff Sgt. Jennifer Japalucci, 455th Expeditionary Medical Operations Squadron, passes out snacks to an Afghan who entered Bagram Airfield for medical treatment Jan. 5, 2010. Japalucci is stationed at Nellis Air Force Base, Nev., and is from Nemkirchen, Germany. (U.S. Air Force photo by: Tech. Sgt. Jeromy K. Cross)



NEWS BRIEFS

IMMUNIZATIONS: Are your immunizations up to date? Active-duty members are required to stay current on all immunizations during their deployment. Report to your nearest medical treatment facility to check your status and get vaccinated. For questions, contact Task Force Medical Public Health, 431-4426.

NEWCOMERS INPROCESSING: All Air Force members are required to inprocess with PERSCO. The inprocessing will start your combat pay entitlements. If you have been in the area of responsibility for at least 30 days and you are not receiving combat pay, visit Finance in the crow's nest tower on Camp Cunningham. If you know for a fact that you did not inprocess with PERSCO, visit PERSCO located in Bldg. 700 near the passenger terminal. Call 431-2070/4409 for more information.

COMBAT O: Combat Orientation is every Friday at 0130Z/0600L at the MWR Clamshell. Uniform is Air Force PT uniform for fitness assessment. This is a mandatory briefing for all Air Force personnel assigned to Bagram Airfield. Accountability is tracked and will be forwarded to the first sergeants.

Did You Know:

1 in 33 men and 1 in 6 women

will be sexually assaulted

In their *lifetime*?

Every 150 seconds, someone is
assaulted somewhere in America?

80% of victims *know* their assailant?

Always take a Wingman

If you are interested in becoming a
Victim Advocate, contact

Capt. Jose Milan

DSN: 318-431-4060

455aew.sarc@bgab.afcent.af.mil



Do not take backpacks,
briefcases, suitcases
or packages into public
gathering facilities or
areas. *Do not* leave
these items unattended
anywhere.

455 AEW AT/FP Office: 431-4207
Capt. Sprute - Antiterrorism Officer
MSgt. Holtzmann - Antiterrorism Superintendent

Force Protection is *your* business - *everyone* is a sensor



Must wash their hands
before returning to work...



WEDNESDAY
0800 & 1930



THURSDAY
0800 & 1930




FRIDAY
0800 & 1930



SATURDAY
0800 & 1930



SUNDAY
0800 & 1600





**Vulture's Nest
Movie Nights**
Jan 6 Through Jan 10



Looking for something to do?

**THE ROCK @ CAMP CUNNINGHAM
PRESENTS**

PUSH N PULL

**ONE PUSHUP FOLLOWED BY ONE PULL UP= ONE ROUND
PERFORM AS MANY ROUNDS AS POSSIBLE IN 60 SEC.**

Saturday, 09 Jan @ 1900hrs
The ROCK Fitness Center,
Camp Cunningham

**For more information contact
The ROCK Fitness Center.
431-3585.**

work gym sleep work gym sleep work gym

Break the Cycle:

sleep work gym sleep work gym sleep

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Volunteer

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sleep work Base Clean Up gym sleep

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Contact your First Sergeant for more details.